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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 1 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

Temporary President: Mr. SERRATE CUELLAR (Bolivia)

President: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared open the fortieth session of the Governing Council.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT

2. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT said that the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Congo to the United Nations had informed the Governing Council secretariat that, owing to his absence from New York, Mr. Adouki would not be in a position to preside over the current session of the Council. Under rule 11 of the Council's rules of procedure, it was the turn of a member of the African Group of States to hold the presidency in 1993. The Group had therefore nominated Mr. Hadid (Algeria) for election to the office of President.

3. Mr. Hadid (Algeria) was elected President by acclamation.

4. Mr. Hadid (Algeria) took the Chair.

5. The PRESIDENT said that the Governing Council was meeting at a time when the international economic and political situation was undergoing radical and unprecedented changes. At the current session, the Council would consider a number of very important questions. With the cooperation of all members and observers, the Council would be able to take constructive decisions to maintain and strengthen the pivotal role of UNDP in promoting the development efforts of developing countries and improving living conditions throughout the world.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (DP/1993/L.8)

6. The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to adopt the agenda as contained in annex I to document DP/1993/L.8.

7. The agenda was adopted.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

8. The PRESIDENT drew the attention of the members of the Council to the tentative schedule of work set forth in document DP/1993/L.8/Corr.1. As usual, the schedule of work was provisional so that the Council and its subsidiary bodies would be able to take up various items on a flexible basis. If consideration of an item was completed before the date indicated, the Council would move immediately to the next item on the schedule. He took it that the Council wished to adopt the schedule of work.

9. It was so decided.

10. The PRESIDENT, turning to the issue of the assignment of responsibilities to the Vice-Presidents, said that in February the Council had agreed that Mr. Serrate Cuellar (Bolivia) should chair the Standing Committee for Programme

(The President)

Matters and Mr. Rade (Netherlands) should chair the Budgetary and Finance Committee. At that time, the Council had deferred the appointment of the Chairman of the Drafting Group. After consultations among the officers of the Council, he wished to inform the Council that Mr. Ziaran (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Mr. Rysinski (Poland) had been appointed to serve as Co-Chairman of the Drafting Group.

STATEMENT BY THE ADMINISTRATOR

11. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator) drew attention to a number of very important items to be dealt with by the Council, which would, for example, consider 15 UNFPA country programmes and 27 UNDP country programmes as well as 15 extensions. The usual practice of having resident representatives participate during consideration of some of those country programmes would continue. There were a number of specific policy papers, relating, in particular, to multilateral coordination and complementarity and the Programme's comparative advantage. The Council would resume the review of follow-up action by UNDP to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and would consider developments relating to the Secretary-General's initiative in the restructuring of the economic and social operations of the United Nations, particularly as they related to UNDP and the Office for Projects Services (OPS). His proposals concerning the staffing and top echelons of UNDP were submitted to the Council in the context of the 1994-1995 budget estimates.

12. The Council would also deal with important programme-level activities, such as HIV/AIDS, women in development, non-governmental organizations and grass-roots organizations, regional and economic integration and the Management Development Programme. In view of the many important items on the agenda, it was essential to maintain the spirit of consensus that had characterized the Council's deliberations in previous years in an atmosphere of frank and cordial discussions. The challenges that lay ahead in the new era were enormous and he hoped that the Council's efforts would be productive and meaningful for the developing world.

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

(a) ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1992 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (DP/1993/29 (Parts I, II and III), DP/1993/30, 31, 32 and Corr.1, DP/1993/33 and 34 and Corr.1)

13. Mrs. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund), introducing the report of the Executive Director for 1992 (DP/1993/29, Parts I, II and III), expressed profound appreciation for the constructive support which the Governing Council continued to give to UNFPA. Population issues were at the forefront of the development agenda. The preparatory process for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development had led to a tremendously rich discussion of the choices and responsibilities that those issues implied. First and foremost was the recognition that population issues involved individual choices and responsibilities. If population programmes truly catered to the needs of individual women and men, all national and global goals could be easily met. In keeping with such an approach, family planning

(Mrs. Sadik)

should be seen from a broad perspective encompassing reproductive and sexual health and personal well-being. Adequate attention should be given to such matters as sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, abortion, infertility, harmful traditional practices and maternal mortality. In particular, there was a need to reach more effectively adolescent girls and boys and ensure that men were more supportive of, and participated in, family planning.

14. Population programmes should be better designed in order to reflect fully a gender perspective and help empower women to make decisions for themselves. Women must be able to surmount the social and cultural barriers limiting their use of family planning, even in places where access to such services existed. Matters that no one had dared to address before must now be on the agenda, including exploitation of and violence against women, both in times of peace and in times of crisis. The world was facing an unprecedented opportunity, which must be seized now.

15. She would now briefly refer to some of the documents that UNFPA was presenting to the Council.

16. UNFPA was submitting a report on its experience in implementing the priority-country system (DP/1993/33), which, in essence, recommended that the current criteria and thresholds for designating priority countries should be maintained. The report also recommended that the list of priority countries should be updated more frequently.

17. Document DP/1993/32 and Corr.1 contained a progress report on UNFPA successor support cost arrangements. UNFPA was pleased to report that the initial difficulties in the implementation of the new system had been mostly overcome.

18. The report on UNFPA collaboration with the World Bank and the regional development banks (DP/1993/34) reviewed collaborative experience at the country, regional and global levels, outlined complementarities and constraints, and recommended further steps to advance the programmatic and substantive collaborative process.

19. Document DP/1993/30 contained the work plan for 1994-1997 and a request for programme expenditure authority. Although the work plan included a contribution from the United States Government, contributions from the Fund's traditional donors had not increased sufficiently to match programme requirements. The work plan for 1994-1997 therefore reflected a more conservative approach to resource planning.

20. The Fund's biennial budget estimates for the administrative and programme support services for the 1994-1995 biennium were presented in document DP/1993/35, and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions was contained in document DP/1993/38. At the current meeting she would refer only to a few points that needed underscoring in that connection. The budget proposal for the 1994-1995 biennium was based on sound income estimates and took into account the need to contain administrative expenditures. Proposed volume increases in the budget, by and large, had been

(Mrs. Sadik)

offset by volume decreases elsewhere in the proposal, resulting in a zero volume-increase proposal.

21. In accordance with the Secretary-General's request that UNFPA participate in the process of restructuring the United Nations by reducing its senior establishment, the budget proposal included a reduction of three senior-level posts at headquarters at the Assistant Secretary-General, D-2 and D-1 levels.

22. She would now turn to a brief review of the UNFPA programme in 1992 and some highlights of the current year. Although the resource utilization rate had decreased from 103.1 per cent in 1991 to 81.8 per cent in 1992 as a result of factors such as more cautious programming, uncertainty about the Fund's resources and internal strife in a number of countries, it was still high enough to show that the delivery of the UNFPA programme was satisfactory.

23. In line with the Governing Council's directives, and reflecting the progress being made in addressing individuals' unmet needs and the priority that countries now placed on extending family planning information and services as a key component of a strategy for an effective population programme, allocations to priority countries had increased from 73.1 per cent in 1991 to 74.2 per cent in 1992, with the largest share of programme resources - 49.3 per cent - being allocated to family planning and another 16.6 per cent to associated information, education and communication activities. UNFPA had continued to devote particular attention to expanding and strengthening programmes in the sub-Saharan Africa region. In all its programme activities, the Fund had been guided by the principle set out in the World Population Plan of Action of seeking to provide women and men with family planning information and services so as to enable them to exercise their fundamental human right to decide on matters of child-bearing and to safeguard their reproductive health. In that connection, UNFPA had continued to place special emphasis on advocacy with a view to improving the status of women.

24. Where the newly independent States were concerned, given the Fund's limited resources, most of the family planning needs identified in those countries could be met only if additional special resources could be mobilized, although UNFPA could and would provide some technical assistance and modest support.

25. The UNFPA global initiative on contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs in developing countries had progressed rapidly in 1992.

26. Also in 1992, UNFPA had - in keeping with its mandate and in collaboration with Governments, non-governmental organizations and other United Nations agencies and organizations - secured a notable expansion in the extent and scope of its support for AIDS prevention and control as part of national family planning programmes.

27. Following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNFPA had begun to examine its activities to ensure that the goals of Agenda 21 were reflected in the programmes it supported. In that regard, it was arranging a consultation later during the current year to address problems encountered in translating those relatively new concepts into operational programmes.

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28. While the Fund had improved its collaboration efforts with the World Bank, the regional banks and UNICEF, those efforts could be considerably strengthened and expanded in the future. It had also continued to cooperate with non-governmental organizations, especially the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the Population Council, and planned - as a result of greater decentralization of authority to UNFPA field offices - to address seriously the recommendation made by the recent donor evaluation of the Fund to make more use of the expertise available in non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

29. Although many of the existing programming and other policies of UNFPA were well in line with General Assembly resolution 47/199, the Fund was further expanding decentralization and delegation of approval authority at headquarters as well as at the country level. It had also pioneered the decentralization of technical support to countries and to the subregional level. While the Fund fully supported the idea that the resident coordinator function should be strengthened, it felt that it was now time to ensure better the identity and authority of the UNFPA country director in order to strengthen the effectiveness and visibility of the UNFPA programme.

30. In the Fund's view, the approach to population issues must be pragmatic and respond to the strategic needs of individual countries at a given time. To be effective, population assistance must also address needs which were crucial to the legitimacy and sustainability of programmes.

31. The recent tri-donor evaluation of UNFPA and some of the field visits of Governing Council members demonstrated that the Fund's approach had been quite effective on the whole. Some of the recommendations put forward by the evaluation addressed the need to sharpen the strategic focus of UNFPA assistance, and to strengthen field office capacity and access for such offices to sources of technical and other support. As such support was essential to facilitating national execution as well as decentralization in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/199, she had extended access for UNFPA field offices to national expertise in direct support of and as part of programme activities.

32. A top challenge for the Fund was ensuring that it became a centre of excellence and a provider of valued expert advice and effective, quality programmes. UNFPA was prepared to assist countries and donors in identifying key strategic interventions and further improve accountability for its own resources with clearer results and value for the investments made. To achieve that, however, it required a certain flexibility in order to respond to the special needs of each particular country.

33. One of the foremost challenges facing the Fund for the remainder of the 1990s was the urgent need to mobilize increased resources and to have a more predictable system of financing. In that regard, she was grateful for the Nordic United Nations study and the work on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields; the draft General Assembly resolution on that issue also provided an important step forward towards a new funding system.

(Mrs. Sadik)

34. UNFPA was making every effort further to improve the effective use of existing resources. Developing countries must show their commitment by increasing funding for population programmes and for social development programmes in general. It was up to developing and developed countries alike to decide to what extent, in the face of competing demands, the commitment required to extend and improve population and development programmes would be maintained. While she appreciated the fact that some donors were opposed to fixed shares or amounts, the percentage of official development assistance was a useful indicator.

35. UNFPA's own funding situation remained a serious concern. Demands by countries far exceeded available funds. In 1992, the total UNFPA income of about $238.2 million had been only 6.3 per cent more than the 1991 figure of $224.0 million. For the current year, results of fund-raising remained extremely disappointing. Contributions for 1993 were expected to be about the same as the previous year. That situation was partly the result of an actual decrease in contributions from some of the Fund's traditional donors and partly the result of a decrease brought about by the relative strength of the United States dollar vis-à-vis the currency of the pledge. She strongly appealed to donors for increased funding in 1993. She also hoped that the United States would once again become a UNFPA donor at a level that would truly reflect the priority that the United States Administration gave to women's reproductive health, informed choice and population as a critical part of measures for sustainable development.

36. She reiterated the Fund's gratitude to its traditional major donors especially those that had maintained and even increased their contributions despite domestic financial constraints. She also thanked the developing countries that continued to make extreme sacrifices in order to be able to contribute to UNFPA, thus signifying the importance they attached to population activities.

37. With respect to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, one of the hallmarks of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference had been the extent of the agreement and the similarity of views and the sense of interest and commitment among attending delegations. Participants had reaffirmed the need for the Conference to be action-oriented, to build upon the outcome of the previous world population conferences and to provide a new set of selected priority recommendations. It was now essential to channel the considerable energy generated during the Preparatory Committee session towards the implementation of the population agenda as parts of the preparation for the Conference and beyond.

38. She expressed her gratitude for the support of all countries and participants into the preparatory process leading up to the Conference, appealed to all countries to make financial contributions to the Conference, and thanked UNICEF for its financial and personnel support for the Conference and UNDP for the proposed secondment of a staff member from UNDP to the Conference secretariat. She hoped that other United Nations agencies and organizations would provide similar support for the Conference.

39. Mr. MILLERON (Under-Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis) said that since the previous session of the Governing Council extensive restructuring had been undertaken of the economic and social sector of the United Nations Secretariat. That restructuring had so far led to the establishment of three new departments, including his own. His department's main tasks included the analysis of economic and social developments; the monitoring and evaluation, from a global perspective, of economic and social trends and policies; the preparation of projections and the identification of new issues requiring the international community's attention; the gathering, improvement and dissemination of economic and social information; and the implementation of cooperation activities in the area of statistics and population. Some of the elements within the Department's mandate were highly relevant either directly or indirectly to the work of UNFPA and its Governing Council.

40. Since its creation in 1946, the Population Division had endeavoured to provide a standard and consistent set of population figures for use throughout the United Nations system and operational organizations of the United Nations system had relied on the Division to provide them with up-to-date population information.

41. According to the 1992 revision of the estimates, the world's population stood at 5.5 billion persons and was growing at the rate of 1.7 per cent annually. It could reach 6.2 billion by the end of the century and 8.5 billion by the year 2025. The important point to note in that growth phenomenon was that the average annual population growth rate had remained virtually unchanged since 1975, despite extensive efforts made by national Governments and the international community to reduce the growth rate. Encouraged by the achievements of some Governments in curtailing their countries' population growth rates in a short period of time, the Department had projected that the growth rate would decline by one per cent by the year 2025. Over three quarters of the world's population now lived in the less developed regions and 92 per cent of the world's population increase by the year 2025 would occur in those regions, whose population could reach 7.1 billion.

42. Among the less developed regions, the population of Africa is expected to expand from the 1992 level of 12 per cent of the world's population to 19 per cent by the year 2025, while the countries of Latin America were expected to maintain their share of about 8 per cent of the world's population during the same period. The share of the world's population living in Asia was expected to decline slightly from 59 per cent to 58 per cent by 2025. Within Asia, the share of China would continue to decline - from 22 per cent to 18 per cent. India would maintain its 16 per cent share of the world's population by the year 2025. Currently, about 60 per cent of the world's population was living in the 10 largest countries, with China and India accounting for 38 per cent of the world's population. Another 14 per cent was living in 12 countries with populations between 50 and 100 million persons. That meant that nearly three quarters of the world's population lived in 22 countries.

43. Although there had been some improvement in health conditions in the less developed regions, the large majority of the population there still did not have access to adequate health facilities. Life expectancy at birth was estimated to be 62.4 years during the period 1990-1994, on average, but it was significantly

(Mr. Milleron)

lower in some areas. The international community must continue to strengthen its efforts to improve the health of all people, particularly those in areas lacking a significant health infrastructure and adequate resources, knowledge and access to a healthy environment.

44. He was gratified to note that estimates of fertility in developing countries continued to show a declining trend; the average fertility rate in the 1975-1980 period was 4.6 children per woman, while the average estimated for the period 1990-1995 was 3.6. However, the annual number of births continued to rise because of the increasing number of women of child-bearing age. According to the Department's data, the number of births during the 1990-1995 period would be five per cent higher than it had been in the period 1985-1990.

45. Direct and indirect support of family planning services based on freedom of choice was also an encouraging development. Efforts in that area undertaken by Governments and non-government organizations had produced significant changes in contraceptive practices. For example, the rate of contraceptive use among women of child-bearing age had reached 53 per cent by 1992, which represented a fivefold increase since the period 1960-1965. Africa remained the only large region where the practice of contraception remained limited in the majority of countries. There was some variation between North African and sub-Saharan African countries with respect to rates of contraceptive use. In approximately 22 sub-Saharan countries with data on contraception, only 5 per cent of couples apparently had access to effective modern methods of contraception. By contrast, the rate of contraceptive use in East Asia was 72 per cent, or approximately the same level as in more developed countries. In Latin America, the average rate of contraceptive use was 57 per cent. Organized family planning and socio-economic development were related to each other in a mutually-reinforcing way.

46. Urbanization and migration were also important demographic trends. According to estimates for 1992, more than 43 per cent of the world's population lived in cities. In the developed regions of the world that rate reached 73 per cent, as compared to 34 per cent in the developing regions. The annual rate of urban population growth for the world as a whole in the period 1985-1990 (2.7 per cent) had been far in excess of the rate of growth of total population. Total urban population had increased by approximately 284 million between 1985 and 1990 in absolute numbers, although that increase was distributed very unevenly among regions. In addition, migration, especially in Europe, was once again becoming an important question on the world's agenda. The combined effects of political conflict, natural disasters, social strife and the advent of a European common market would be likely to increase the number of migrants and refugees in the future.

47. Lastly, the ageing of the world's population constituted another important demographic challenge. The proportion of people 65 years of age or older had increased steadily over the past forty years, although it remained within the range of 3-7 per cent of total population. However, the rate of growth of the population 65 and older was appreciably greater than the rate of growth in the number of children. It had been estimated that the over-65 population would grow from 328 million in 1990 to 828 million in the year 2025. Nearly half of all people aged 65 and older lived in Asia, although large elderly populations

(Mr. Milleron)

could also be found in Europe, North America, and the former Soviet Union. The social, psychological, and economic needs of the elderly population would remain a major concern for many countries and for the international community as well.

48. He also drew attention to the linkages between population, poverty and the environment; he emphasized the potentially positive aspect of population as a resource for development and the need to make the development of human resources a cornerstone of larger development efforts.

49. He was pleased that a cooperative relationship had developed between UNFPA and the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, particularly the Population and Statistics Divisions. He looked forward to collaborating with UNFPA in such areas as the implementation of technical assistance to individual countries and planning for the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in Cairo, and in follow-up activities connected with the Conference.

50. Mr. HAAKONSEN (Observer for Denmark) speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the Executive Director's report had provided much food for thought, particularly in its use of statistics to illustrate population trends.

51. The International Conference on Population and Development would impart new impetus to efforts in the population field after a period in which resources for population activities had been lacking. Preparations for the 1994 Conference were well under way, and the conclusions and recommendations emerging from regional conferences and meetings of experts had been considered during the preparatory process. The importance that the States members of the European Community attached to preparations for the Conference was demonstrated in their recent adoption of a resolution concerning family planning and population policies in developing countries, and in the participation of the Community in the European Population Conference in March 1993.

52. Despite the late distribution of relevant documentation, the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Population and Development had produced results that would prove to be of value for the third session of the Preparatory Committee and for the Conference itself. The preparatory process would be strengthened even further by the decision to discuss an annotated outline of the final document of the Cairo Conference at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly and to have the Conference secretariat prepare a draft document based on comments from participants in the second preparatory session and at the General Assembly. He looked forward to receiving that document well in advance of the third session of the Preparatory Committee.

53. The report that had followed the independent evaluation of UNFPA conducted by three major donors contained many useful comments and recommendations regarding the performance of UNFPA and its Governing Council; he hoped that there would be active debate on those recommendations in the UNDP Governing Council. In that connection, he drew attention to recommendations in the report with respect to financing, programme selection procedures, and programme implementation and design. In the past, UNDP had sometimes lacked the courage

(Mr. Haakonsen, Observer, Denmark)

to resist pressure from Governments and to maintain its professional conclusions and that had resulted in some bad investments in certain projects.

54. Africa would require particular attention from the Fund in coming years. Although the population of Africa was only 13 per cent of the world population, Africa was the place where the highest population growth rates were to be found. The Executive Director had been requested to report to the Council on the implementation of a UNFPA assistance strategy for sub-Saharan Africa. Although positive developments could be identified in many areas, the fact that a high percentage of the population continued to have little or no access to reproductive health services was discouraging. The report had noted that countries with low contraceptive prevalence levels also lacked formal population programmes. Although UNFPA could point to successes in certain areas, further effort was required, particularly in the fields of advocacy and policy formulation. Recent declines in levels of UNFPA support for Africa were therefore a matter of profound concern.

55. The Executive Director had also been requested to report on the implementation of a strategy to strengthen the Fund's capacity to address questions concerning women, population and development. The Fund had participated in a wide range of workshops, seminars and meetings on issues relating to women. UNFPA had long been aware of the crucial importance of involving women in all aspects of programme design and execution. However, the direct impact of those workshops, seminars and meetings on projects in the field was not always clear. The development of a reporting system encompassing an in-house database in the near future, and the new "Gender Reporting Form" could help to improve the accuracy of assessments in that area. However, the database design should not neglect the need for closer monitoring of other target groups, including adolescent males.

56. Close cooperation among all participants in the population field, particularly non-governmental organizations and the private sector, was essential to mobilizing private initiative and creativity at the grass-roots level. The effectiveness of programmes could be enhanced by exploiting the different comparative advantages of non-governmental organizations and the private sector in planning and delivery.

57. The European Community attached great importance to the conclusions and recommendations set out in General Assembly resolution 47/199 concerning methods for improving the operational activities of the United Nations development system. The coordination mechanisms to which the Executive Director's report made reference were important elements in establishing a common approach. He hoped that UNFPA would continue to play an important role in the future in promoting coordination among Governments and development agencies in the fields of population and development. To that end, the preparation of country strategy notes and harmonization of programming cycles between United Nations agencies and Governments were essential. Lastly, the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries would provide a useful forum for the exchange of practical and technical know-how concerning population and family planning questions.

58. Mr. KÄÄRIÄ (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that it was becoming vitally important to address the interlinkages between questions of population and sustainable development; as a result it was necessary to combine efforts to control population growth with activities to alleviate poverty and to change global patterns of production and consumption.

59. The report of the Executive Director clearly showed that UNFPA was making efforts to improve the quality of its work in order to meet the challenges of the future. The conclusions and recommendations of General Assembly resolution 47/199 regarding the operational activities of United Nations agencies would have an important impact on the operational activities of UNFPA.

60. The report arising from the independent evaluation of UNFPA provided important recommendations with respect to future directions and activities of the Fund. The report had recommended greater emphasis on information, education, and communication (IEC) activities, particularly the targeting of audiences. For that reasons, it was a matter of concern to his delegation that the share of resources allocated to IEC activities in various UNFPA programmes had diminished slightly. He hoped that the situation would prove to be temporary. IEC activities had an important role to play in the Fund's future activities, especially in the light of the views expressed by other representatives regarding comparative advantages and the need to strengthen the advocacy and policy work of the Fund.

61. The Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD) exercise provided the key to success in developing programmes. However, the independent evaluation had noted that, although the exercise had been a positive step in most cases, there was insufficient feedback to the programming process as a result of the exercise. In many countries a lack of strategic focus continued to be a problem, and in many cases too many projects had been implemented having only marginal impact on long-term population goals.

62. Capacity-building and government execution were fundamental and should be strengthened. It was a matter of concern that out of a total sum of $34.17 million for government-executed projects, $21.8 million had gone to assistance for procurement. The Nordic countries would like to see better use made of the comparative advantage of UNFPA as a centre of excellence in the field of population.

63. In that connection, the work of the country support teams was so far unsatisfactory and his Government welcomed the evaluation planned for the end of 1993. That evaluation should address, in particular, the role and composition of the country support teams and their ability to respond to the needs of Governments in the area of capacity-building, with due regard for the complexity of the issues involved in the field of population and sustainable development.

64. The independent evaluation report of UNFPA had recommended improvements in certain areas of activity in order to enhance the quality of programmes and projects, make more rapid progress towards the achievement of specific population objectives, and promote capacity-building and the sustainability of population programmes. UNFPA should ensure that quality took precedence in its programming and should focus on continued capacity-building within national institutions. Staff in field offices should have sufficient managerial capacity

(Mr. Kääriä, Finland)

and the analytical and evaluation skills to support national authorities. A comprehensive system of programme and project quality review was also needed. The evaluation report had also stressed the need for proper monitoring of projects and programmes and for financial accountability.

65. The report of the Executive Director highlighted the strategy for sub-Saharan Africa and the theme of women, population and development, both of which were central to the mandate of UNFPA, which was to reach the poor and underprivileged. Women were at the core of all activities related to population, and UNFPA should therefore review its activities on women, population and development in order to improve its contribution in that area to the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994.

66. While the status report had given some explanation for the decline in Africa's share of UNFPA activities from 1991 to 1992, many questions had been left unanswered. The results of long-term work were emerging only very slowly and were not apparent everywhere. The Nordic countries wished to stress the urgency of Africa's needs and would welcome more information on how UNFPA could strengthen its work in Africa.

67. With respect to resource allocation, clear priorities should be established for UNFPA activities, taking into account the increasing importance of an integrated approach to population and development. Better coordination with other actors in the field of population and development and a clear division of labour were necessary, particularly since the resources available were not increasing as fast as before.

68. Ms. VOLKOFF (Canada) said that she would concentrate first on the strategic choices that must be made by UNFPA if it was to achieve impact and be effective and then on the need for UNFPA to define better its accountability and to be held accountable for its choices. Both of those themes were currently echoed throughout the United Nations development system in the context of the reform of the Organization and in the light of the current situation with respect to financial resources.

69. The Council was meeting at a time when global needs and challenges, both within and outside the population arena, were daily expanding, while the resources available to meet those challenges were not. The sense of urgency behind United Nations reform stemmed from that resource pressure and from the need for greater efficiency within the United Nations development system. The best way to achieve efficiency was to look at the total system, and not only at its parts. The budget of UNFPA represented only 5 per cent of the total resources spent annually in developing countries on population-related activities. It was therefore evident that UNFPA would have to use its budget strategically, in full cognizance of the other 95 per cent, if it was to make its dollars count.

70. The recent independent evaluation of UNFPA had confirmed the unique role of UNFPA in population assistance, particularly in sensitizing political and opinion leaders to population issues. It had also confirmed that UNFPA was stretched too thinly in terms of financial and human resources to fulfil its mandate. In order to be effective, UNFPA needed to focus on those areas, both

(Ms. Volkoff, Canada)

globally and within individual countries, in which it had a comparative advantage, and to make strategic choices in terms of which work it chose to do and where.

71. With regard to the choice of countries, the priority system needed to be refined in order to make it a more prescriptive tool. Priority criteria should help to evaluate needs and thus allocate resources on a priority basis. The current criteria outlined in document DP/1993/33 constituted a descriptive rather than a prescriptive instrument which seemed to have had little or no bearing on the amount of investment in priority versus non-priority countries.

72. In terms of programme choices, UNFPA would be more effective if it tailored the scope of its country programmes not only to needs, but also to existing government and other donor programming. There should be no predetermined mix of activities for countries, since it had been broadly recognized that UNFPA programmes cut across all work-plan categories in roughly similar proportions in different country situations. Surely, however, there should be a difference in programming between countries such as Bangladesh, where UNFPA provided only 2 per cent of donor funding for population activities, and those countries in which it funded over two thirds of donor activity. Canada hoped that the United Nations country strategy note outlined in resolution 47/199 would assist Governments working with UNFPA in making choices based on the comparative advantage of UNFPA as one member of a development team in the area of population issues. Her Government welcomed the support which UNFPA had undertaken to provide for the country strategy note process and for the relevant inter-agency fora.

73. With regard to its choice of approach, UNFPA was carrying too many small projects in its portfolio and needed to focus on desired impact rather than on individual activities, to reduce the number of projects, and to shift towards a programme approach.

74. On the question of accountability, a key theme of discussions to date on the restructuring of the United Nations system had been the roles and responsibilities of different parts of the system. Whatever the final outcome of those discussions, UNFPA would have to define better the accountability not only of the Governing Council but also of its secretariat, its representatives in the field, and its executing agencies. Moreover, once the accountability of the different actors had been established, they should then be held to account.

75. In keeping with that approach, for example, the accountability of representatives of UNFPA for contributing to the formulation of a United Nations country strategy note should be reflected in their performance appraisals. By the same token, UNFPA should prepare and train its representatives to take on the additional responsibilities and accountability that decentralization entailed. While the decentralization of decision-making within UNFPA should be applauded, it was its headquarters which should be held accountable for ensuring that the process was carried out in a responsible manner.

76. Monitoring and evaluation were important parts of an accountability structure. UNFPA should ensure that project plans included sufficient detail to permit cogent monitoring. It should also ensure that there were adequate

(Ms. Volkoff, Canada)

resources in the field to carry out effective monitoring. One tool of proper monitoring was a sound financial reporting system, and UNFPA should ensure that improvements in its procedures and systems for reporting all project expenditures were completed as quickly as possible. Her Government recommended to the Council the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the independent evaluation on those matters.

77. Ms. DRZEWIENIECKA (Poland) said that UNFPA had an important role to play in finding solutions to the complex population problems of the contemporary world at both the international and the regional level. In that connection, the World Plan of Action, the Amsterdam Declaration on a Better Life for Future Generations, which confirmed the importance of population problems in the development process, the reports on the state of the world's population and specialized population publications represented a useful contribution by UNFPA.

78. The Government of Poland valued its cooperation with UNFPA and was constantly seeking to expand the scope of that cooperation. Technical support and financial assistance from UNFPA had been instrumental in the preparation of the 1993-1996 UNFPA country programme for Poland, in cooperation with relevant Polish ministries and other institutions. Her Government looked forward to further support from UNFPA and other relevant international organizations for the completion of the programme and its early acceptance and execution.

79. For the past several years, Poland had resolutely set about transforming its political, economic and social system. The success of that effort would have a positive impact beyond the borders of Poland. Successes, however, had been tempered by certain set-backs, including the deteriorating state of health of the Polish population, the increase in mortality, particularly that of men in their productive years, and soaring unemployment.

80. Poland increasingly faced health problems associated with the advent of modernization. Consequently, the needs of the population for medical assistance were expanding much more rapidly than were the resources to meet those needs. Infectious diseases of the digestive system and tuberculosis were major health problems, and the morbidity rate from viral hepatitis was higher than in other European countries. The number of AIDS cases was also on the rise, and increasingly health problems were associated with the process of the ageing of society and the increase in the number of disabled people.

81. Poland had consolidated its population growth at a level lower than the replacement rate. In 1992, it had recorded its lowest birth and fertility rates since the Second World War. At the same time, since 1990, its active population had been increasing markedly, unlike the trend in the other European countries, a phenomenon which had certain implications for a labour market that was experiencing the difficulties associated with the economic transformation under way. In recent years, the labour market in Poland had been characterized by massive unemployment, particularly among women and young people. Especially alarming was the phenomenon of long-term unemployment.

82. The complexity of those problems created severe pressures towards migration and constituted a threat to the process of economic transformation not only in Poland, but also in other countries of Eastern and Central Europe which faced

(Ms. Drzewieniecka, Poland)

the same problems. It was therefore essential to promote international cooperation in all those areas which could help to prevent the spread of those negative trends.

83. Cooperation with UNFPA was crucial to overcoming population problems, and her Government looked forward to continued and expanded cooperation with UNFPA in the future. Poland, which had scientific research expertise in the field of population, was ready to share its own experiences with other countries, through UNFPA.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.